

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
September 8, 2005

CALIFORNIA AND THE WORLD OCEAN 2006

File No. 05-064
Project Manager: Neal Fishman

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$150,000 to the Coastal Conservancy Association to plan and sponsor the *California and the World Ocean '06* conference.

LOCATION: Long Beach (with international participation)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Integrated Coastal and Marine Resources

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Protecting our Ocean: California's Action Strategy

Exhibit 2: Letters of Support

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31000 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

"The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of an amount not to exceed one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to the Coastal Conservancy Association to plan and sponsor *California and the World Ocean 2006*, subject to the condition that prior to disbursement of any funds, the California Ocean Protection Council finds that the proposed expenditure is a high priority."

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

"Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the purposes of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding undertaking plans and feasibility studies for ocean and marine resources.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.

3. The Coastal Conservancy Association is a nonprofit organization existing under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, and whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the California Public Resources Code.”
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PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff is requesting that the Conservancy provide up to \$150,000 to the Coastal Conservancy Association, to pay for facilities and services needed to carry out a major conference on ocean resources titled *California and the World Ocean '06*. This conference was called for in the Governor’s ocean agenda: *Protecting our Ocean: California’s Action Strategy* (see Exhibit 1). It would be the fourth such conference since 1964 and is expected to draw approximately 1,000 scientists, engineers, activists, and government officials from around the world to share information about the ocean. As was the case in both 1997 and 2002, *CWO '06* is expected to lead to significant advances in ocean science, law, policy and management.

The creation of the California Ocean Protection Council, the expansion of the Coastal Conservancy’s role in ocean governance, and recent legislative appropriations for ocean protection were a direct result of the interaction between scientists and policy makers at the 2002 California ocean conference and the subsequent publication of the Pew Oceans Commission and United States Commission on Ocean Policy reports. The 2002 conference highlighted scientific papers and policy reports on diverse topics including: governance; ocean and coastal resource economics; habitats and ecosystem management; fisheries and aquaculture; energy, climate and transportation; coastal sediment management and shoreline processes; research, data and technology; and science and education. Previous conferences focused on how California’s increasing population impacted each of these areas and created a call to action based deterioration of ocean indicators as compared to 1964 when the first such conference was held.

CWO '06 will also focus on current and increasing threats to the ocean environment, but will also highlight how well California, the nation and other countries have responded to threats over a four year period. It will evaluate how changes in law and policy, and recent investments in resource restoration and enhancement have impacted the ocean environment. The exchange of information about both successes and failures is expected to directly lead to better future projects to restore ocean resources, and to reduce threats to ocean ecosystems.

The proposed funding would be granted to the Coastal Conservancy Association to contract with meeting planners, a conference facility, meeting recorders, administrative staff, and to publish the conference proceedings. The Association will be fiscal agent for the conference, also receiving and expending funds from other governmental and nongovernmental sources.

Site Description: *CWO '06* will take place in Long Beach in the fall of 2006. Conservancy funds will help to secure meeting space, organize speakers, contact potential exhibitors, schedule workshops, tours, and concurrent meetings, and organize the event.

Project History: The first California and the World Ocean Conference was held in 1964 to evaluate the needs for maintaining and enhancing California’s ocean resources. Subsequent

conferences were held in 1997 and 2002 with the similar goal of ensuring comprehensive and coordinated management of ocean resources in California. Each conference has had a diverse set of sponsors and all have had a significant impact on the State's response to changing needs for a comprehensive approach to managing ocean resources.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy:	\$ 150,000
Registration and event fees:	100,000
Anticipated Foundation Grants/Donations:	150,000
Total Project Cost:	\$ 400,000

The expected source of funds for this project is a FY05/06 appropriation to the Conservancy from the California Environmental License Plate Fund specifically earmarked for activities related to ocean protection. The budget change proposal for these funds anticipated that they would be used for conferences and events as described.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

This project would be undertaken pursuant to Section 31111 of the Conservancy's enabling legislation. This section authorizes the conservancy to fund grants which undertake planning and feasibility studies for purposes of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. Previous ocean conferences in 1997 and 2002 resulted in actions by the Legislature, state agencies, and nonprofit organizations to carry out projects and programs meeting the purposes of this division, including: reducing impacts of population and economic pressures on coastal and marine resources; measures to improve and reduce threats to fish and wildlife habitat within coastal and marine waters; and providing for monitoring and mapping of coastal currents, marine habitats, and marine wildlife.

As in 1997 and 2002, the exchange of information that will occur at *CWO '06* will be used in the planning, design, and implementation of a wide range of projects to be developed under the Conservancy's Integrated Coastal And Marine Resources Protection Program (Chapter 5.5) and Ocean Protection Council projects.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S
STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

The Coastal Conservancy's Strategic Plan was last updated in 2003. Since that time the Legislature has expanded the Conservancy's role in the protection and restoration of ocean resources. These changes are not fully reflected in the Conservancy's goals contained in the Strategic Plan. None-the-less, the conference will help to further many of the Conservancy's existing goals related to economic activity, recreation and habitat protection. The conference will highlight how maintenance and improvement of the coast and ocean environment and the provision of needed infrastructure are the basis for billions of dollars in economic activity in such areas as travel and tourism, international trade, and commercial and recreational fishing.

The conference will also include discussions and presentations on the importance of watershed based restoration projects to ocean health. The Conservancy's Strategic Plan contains discussions and multiple goals dealing with these issues (e.g. completion of the coastal trail and public accessways, urban waterfront restoration, watershed and wetland restoration).

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted January 24, 2001, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** The proposed grant to CCA is supported by (Exhibit 1: Letters of Support).
4. **Location:** The conference will be held in the coastal city of Long Beach, but will attract scientists and scholars from around the world.
5. **Need:** Approximately half of the conference costs will be covered by other governmental and nongovernmental organizations and by conference fees. Conservancy funds are needed to begin organization of the conference and ensure a low enough cost to attract scientists and policy experts from foreign countries, and students, and to provide a conference proceeding that will continue to influence projects and programs in the future.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** This will be an international conference attracting people from around the world.

Additional Criteria

7. **Urgency:** The conference is to be held in the fall of 2006. Funding is needed now to secure space and facilities and to publicize the event.
8. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
9. **Innovation:** The conference is designed to bring together scientists, policy makers, and engineers to develop and share innovative ideas.
10. **Readiness:** The project will be held in the fall of 2006.
11. **Cooperation:** The conference is a cooperative event, participated in and funded by a multitude of public and private entities.

CONSISTENCY WITH COASTAL ACT:

Section 30006.5 of the Public Resources Code encourages sound and timely scientific recommendations coastal planning, conservation, and development decisions. The act encourages input from members of the scientific and academic communities in the social, physical, and natural sciences address issues such as coastal erosion and geology, marine biodiversity, wetland restoration, the question of sea level rise, desalination plants, and the cumulative impact of coastal zone developments.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

Not applicable.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

CWO '06 would be part of the normal operations of the existing Long Beach Convention Center where there is a history of such gatherings and there will continue to be such gatherings for some time to come. It is therefore categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15323 (normal operations of facilities for public gatherings). Upon approval, staff will file a Notice of Exemption.